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Positive Action for a Better Tomorrow

May 15, 2013

Tom Betlach, Director
Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
801 East Jefferson Street
Phoenix, AZ 85034

Dear Mr. Betlach:

Arizona Disability Advocacy Coalition (AzDAC) is a Coalition of eleven Disability non-profit organizations whose mission is to coordinate advocacy efforts that promote public policy, and enhances the choice, dignity, rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities and their families.

AzDAC is in full support of the Governor's plan to restore the Proposition 204 population for individuals who are at or below 100% of federal poverty level. Health care access can save hospitals uncompensated care costs which are passed on to those with health insurance and can reduce overuse and inappropriate use of hospital emergency departments. Health care coverage will provide preventative care, which can save Arizonans more costly health care services and avoid more severe disability. A healthier Arizona is good for everyone and will put us in a better place to manage public health emergencies should they arise.

The Governor's plan for Medicaid restoration is sensible with a "circuit breaker" to allow Arizona to withdraw from Medicaid if costs become prohibitive and is based on a public/private partnership to fund Arizona's share of the cost. The hospital assessment will save Arizona's precious few general fund dollars, so that they can be used to restore other education and human service funding so desperately needed after several years of recession and budget cuts. The Arizona business community has endorsed this plan, as had many County sheriffs. This restoration plan can save some rural Arizona hospitals from closer.

AzDAC Voting Members: Arizona Bridge to Independent Living • Arizona Center for Disability Law • Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing • Arizona Council of the Blind, Inc. • DIRECT Center for Independence • National Multiple Sclerosis Society, AZ Chapter • New Horizons Independent Living Center • People First of Arizona • Self Advocacy Coalition of Arizona • SMILE – Independent Living Center • Statewide Independent Living Council

AzDAC Advisory Members: Arizona Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America • Arizona Technology Access Program • Behavioral Health Consumers in Action • Connecting Arizona Advocates, Inc • Epilepsy Foundation of Arizona • NAU/Institute for Human Development • Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona • Raising Special Kids • State Rehabilitation Council • The Arc of Arizona

AzDAC supports Governor Brewer's Medicaid restoration plan for humane reasons as well. The restoration plan will literally save lives and prevent unnecessary disabilities and secondary conditions when proper health care treatment is available through AHCCCS for the 300,000 Arizonans that the plan will cover. In January 2014, another 60,000 will lose AHCCCS coverage if the legislature does not take action to approve the Governor's plan. It is unacceptable to consider simply trying to maintain the current single adult AHCCCS membership eligibility when, at no cost to Arizona, an additional 250,000 Arizonans could receive coverage through the restoration plan. The lack of health care doesn't just affect the person with the illness; it exposes family and community to communicable illness and heartache unnecessarily.

AzDAC represents Arizonans with all types of disabilities. Proper health care can mitigate, restore and completely heal many sources of disability when it is available in a timely, cost effective manner. Providing health care access for low income Arizonans provides a foundation necessary for their economic stability through employment and protects from unnecessary disability - whether it is protecting an Arizonan from hearing loss due to an untreated ear infection, mobility loss from untreated arthritis, death from untreated asthma, or surgery and follow up treatment for breast or prostate cancer. Therapies are key to successful physical and mental rehabilitation for many disabilities and can help a person get back to employment, rather than a life spent on entitlement programs in poverty.

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Governor Brewer's restoration plan a home run for Arizona citizens statewide and honors the will of the voters. Medicare restoration to Prop 204 levels and up to 133% FPL would bring over \$1.6 Billion into Arizona's economy. The Arizona Small Business Association, the Greater Phoenix Economic Council and many Chambers of Commerce support the Governor's Medicaid restoration plan. AzDAC urges Arizona legislators to support the Governor's plan, regardless of their concern about the viability of the Affordable Care Act, because if we do not get our taxes returned to Arizona via Medicaid, another state will get them.

Sincerely,



David Carey
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cc: Arizona Legislature